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ABSTRACT

In April 1917, the United States went to war, and the public schools across the nation initiated programs that encouraged patriotism, supported war policies, and promoted the assimilation of immigrants. In New York City in 1917-18, the Board of Education: (1) called for the unqualified allegiance of school principals and teachers to the U.S. government; (2) allowed school facilities to be used for war-related activities; (3) began vocational skills training classes for military personnel; (4) started courses in patriotism, citizenship, European history, and on the world war; (5) suspended foreign language instruction; and (6) increased English classes for adult immigrants. At the initiation of the Board, students became involved in selling Liberty Bonds. The male students ages 16-19 were given military training, and some were sent out of the city to work on farms. Since visible patriotism became a requirement for their jobs, teachers were encouraged to support the Board's policies and to enlist in the armed forces or auxiliary services such as the Red Cross. Teachers who dissented were dismissed by the Board as seen in the cases of three teachers at De Witt Clinton High School and two at Manual Training High School. (DJC)

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NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS MARCH OFF TO WAR:

The Nature and Extent of Participation of the City Schools in the Great War

(April 1917 to April 1918)

by
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I. INTRODUCTION

In April of 1917 the United States went to war and so did its public schools. This paper will investigate how schools in New York City, the nation's largest system, responded to the call to war. The experiences of New York City during the first year of belligerency provides much evidence on how national policies are transformed into actual practice at the classroom level.

America's schools were asked to fight a war on two fronts: 1) to encourage patriotism and the support of war policies among students and their parents, and 2) to promote Americanization--the rapid transformation and incorporation of (potentially enemy) aliens into the American mainstream.

The pressing need to rapidly mobilize the American people to fight the Great War highlighted the heterogeneity and lines of cleavage in American society. These differences, long tacitly acknowledged, took on sinister shades. As Barry Karl observed, "the need to 'win the war' produced a sense of urgency that veiled a fear, not simply that the war might be lost or that the consequences of losing it would be dire, but that the cause of failure would be the internal divisions that the years from 1914 to 1917 had revealed so clearly. The war abroad had to be won; but that victory seemed to many to depend on winning the other war--the war at home" (Karl, 39).

In a society that believed in government by the consent of the governed, common action could not easily be achieved by autocratic decree. Rather, voluntary action based on popular consensus was naturally appealing and was relied upon to support the Wilson administration's policies. "The assumption that so vast a national program could be built on a voluntary basis, that Americans, from the top industrial managers down to the lowliest factory laborers, would organize themselves to serve the national war purpose, required the creation of a national will far more purposeful and far

more self-sacrificing than Americans had ever before been asked to sustain.... The belief that all such things could be done with the minimum of legal coercion rested on a willingness to use the maximum of rhetorical persuasion and popular pressure to bring them about" (Karl, 38).

Concerted action, powered by voluntary compliance could overcome all odds. Right joined to might, citizen to citizen, would insure victory. Anyone who failed to join the collective body, who would not pull with the whole, was a counterweight who made difficult the march to victory.

To win the war the popular will had to be attracted and mobilized, and dissenting opinion suppressed. David Kennedy has clearly identified the central importance of favorble public opinion: "More than the other belligerent governments, the Wilson administration was compelled to cultivate--even to manufacture--public opinion favorable to the war effort. Lacking the disciplinary force of quick-coming crisis or imminent peril of physical harm, Wilson had to look to other means to rally his people: to the deliberate mobilization of emotions and ideas. Here, the Great War was peculiarly an affair of the mind" (Kennedy, 46).

The Wilson administration, as well as groups to its left and right, leaped into the battle to shape and control public opinion. "Americans went to war in 1917 not only against Germans in the fields of France but against each other at home. They entered on a deadly serious contest to determine the consequences of the crisis for the character of American economic, social and political life" (Kennedy, 41).

The national consensus which was sought, and which was believed vital to success in the war, presupposed a common set of values, shared behaviors and a high degree of identification with the nation. The more homogeneous the population and the less it was exposed to deviant ideals, values and behaviors, the more likely it could

voluntarily and spontaneously coalesce behind a common plan of action. Differences, deviance of any kind, became suspect and a threat to consensus itself. Conformity had to be rewarded and deviance discouraged or suppressed in order to insure consensus, common action and ultimate victory.

The large and not yet fully assimilated immigrant communities, especially in cities, were perceived by many outsiders as disquietingly different--in language, customs, behaviors and loyalties. Efforts to Americanize immigrants certainly predate the Great War. But the desire to assimilate the newcomers, to transform them into Americans, now became linked to the question of loyalties and allegiances in wartime. Could the immigrant be trusted, would he serve in the army, buy bonds, support the government? Radical politics associated with vocal segments of the immigrant community were also seen as a threat to established ways and, in wartime when support of one's government was expected, political and economic radicalism were often viewed as treason. Under these conditions "Americanization" took on new, more strident tones, and a greatly enhanced importance.

As the nation entered the war, it turned to its schools as vital channels of communications to all Americans, young and old, to broadcast government policies, generate popular support for the U.S. war effort, counter dissenting opinions, and acculturate immigrants so they would mesh with the established American community and join in the great crusade to "make the world safe for democracy."

It was widely believed that "education could cancel out class antagonisms, improve the efficiency of workers, and assimilate immigrants" (Kennedy, 47). Through proper education it would be possible to realize "the ancient American longing for a unanimous spirit, for a single consensual set of values that would guarantee harmony" vital to the pursuit of the war. And the most conspicuous absence of unity in wartime

America was the vast unassimilated urban immigrant community. Thus "the wartime drive for unity, spearheaded by [George] Creel's Committee [on Public Information], led naturally to a campaign for accelerated 'Americanization' of those newcomers" (Kennedy, 63).

While there was considerable activity on the part of established Americans to transform immigrants into images of themselves, it should not be forgotten that the majority of immigrants were willing and anxious to adapt themselves to their new American homes. They needed to learn how to cope with the strange new American environment, to learn of its democratic system of government in which they wished to participate, to learn American life ways, and to speak English. The nation's schools were places to acquire these desired skills and understanding. Substantial numbers of adult immigrants attended New York City's evening schools and public lectures, joined settlement houses, became naturalized citizens and, in overwhelming numbers, chose to send their own children to American public schools (Brumberg, Chapters 6 and 7). In the pre-war years, however, the decision to formally participate in instructional programs of "Americanization," and the rate at which one transformed oneself from greenhorn into Yankee, was a personal decision made by each immigrant or immigrant family. In the war years, there was strong public pressure to conform to American ways, to Americanize, and to do so immediately.

New York City was a prime battleground on the domestic war front. The city's schools were not only asked to actively stimulate patriotic feelings, but to rapidly Americanize their overwhelmingly immigrant stock students, and through them their parents. Children of Jewish immigrants represented over 35% of the nearly 900,000 public school students, and children of Italians approximately 20%. All told, at least 70% of public school enrollments at the time of the Great War were foreign born or children of immigrants.

America at war looked with unease upon its large "foreign" communities. Fearful of the potential enemy at home, police and vigilante groups were used to identify and root out the enemy aliens in their midst (Kennedy, 82-83). In New York City in addition to German-Americans whose loyalties were suspect, Jews and Italians were of particular concern to settled Americans. They were among the most recent of groups to immigrate, were "different" in religion, and clustered into densely settled enclaves. Many were active in unions and had participated in major strikes. Some of their members (a visible, vocal minority) were active in radical movements (Polenberg, Chapter 1).

In the peculiar genius of America and its belief in the educability and perfectability of humankind, police powers were not the principal weapons employed against suspect immigrants, although they certainly were employed (Polenberg, Chapter 2 and 5; Kennedy, Chapter 1). Instead, major reliance was placed upon the public schools to reach immigrant communities in order to counter alien ideologies, sever emotional attachments to old ways, and form new organic ties to the American nation. Immigrants had to be transformed so that all Americans, old and new, could join in a common "American" undertaking--the Great War--and the noble cause for which it stood. As children in New York City's schools learned,

> This war is the war of all nations who want the gains of civilization preserved. It is America's war... Every one of us is at war with Germany, every one of us must serve (The World War: A Syllabus).

As the nation's largest city and the home of the largest and most heterogeneous immigrant population in America, New York City and its schools serve as a highly relevant case study in the translation of national policy into local action. In this paper we shall examine how the Board of Education initiated the intertwined tasks of stimulating patriotism and promoting Americanization.

We shall first examine the immediate reaction of New York City's Board of Education to the declaration of war. We will then observe how the Board formally integrated the school system into the national war effort. We will review policies and programs initiated by the Board to promote patriotism, Americanization and support of the war. We shall also examine how the Board dealt with dissent.

II. FIRST REACTIONS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO THE DECLARATION OF WAR

President Woodrow Wilson ran for re-election in 1916 on the slogan, "he kept us out of war." Following a narrow victory, he was sworn into office for his second term in March 1917, and went before Congress to request a declaration of war against Germany on April 2, 1917. Following heated debate and charges of treason and countercharges of warmongering, the Senate (April 4th) and House (April 6th) voted to declare war by overwhelming majorities. Supporters of neutrality and advocates of pacifism, active participants in the national debates which had raged since the outbreak of the European War in 1914, were unceremoniously relegated to the margins of American society as Wilson immediately signed the war resolution. As of Friday, April 6, 1917 we were officially a nation at war (Ferrell, Chapter 1; Kennedy, Prologue).

The Board of Education of the City of New York met in its regular weekly meeting five days later, on Wednesday, April 11th. Actions taken that day clearly reveal the immediate and wholehearted support for America's entry into the war on the part of the 46 Board members, and indicated the lines along which that support would be transformed into specific educational policies and programs.

The president of the Board, William G. Willcox, opened the meeting by calling attention to the central importance of the schools' teachers "in unifying public opinion

in patriotic support of [the government]," thus striking a theme that would ring throughout the war period: the need to insure that the classroom message--as delivered by teachers--was consistent with active, patriotic support of the U.S. government in time of war. No dissenting voices could or would be tolerated. Thus Willcox proposed the following:

> Whereas, The present crisis imperatively demands from the principals and teachers of our school system a unanimous voice and undivided influence in loyal and patriotic support of the United States Government; and
>
> Whereas, The Board of Education desires also to emphasize the vital importance of impressing upon all pupils of the public schools, the duty of unqualified allegiance and patriotic service; be it
>
> Resolved, That all principals and teachers be requested to join in signing the following declaration as a message to the City and to the Nation from the teaching staff of our great school system:
>
> "We, the undersigned teachers in the public schools of the City of New York, declare our unqualified allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and pledge ourselves by word and example to teach and impress upon our pupils the duty of loyal obedience and patriotic service, as the highest ideal of American citizenship" (Journal 1917, 540f).

It was passed unanimously by the 43 Board members present. For the next 19 months friendly persuasion coupled with rigorous surveillance insured that virtually all teachers would demonstrate by word and deed their "unqualified allegiance" and patriotic support. As we shall see, the Board and its senior administrators moved rapidly and decisively to root out those teachers who dissented from views and policies prescribed by the Board.

The stated meeting of April 11th proved to be highly productive. The Board voted unanimously to implement a resolution adopted by the New York State Assembly that "President Wilson's address to Congress on April 2, 1917, be read in all the schools of the State" (Journal 1917, 541). It also unanimously approved the creation of a

special seven member committee, later named the Special Committee on War Service. As the "Board of Education is at the head of a civilian army of patriotic, intelligent, capable men and women, doubtless willing to render extra public service," the committee would organize teachers and other Board employees into "special units of voluntary service of non-combative character," and would serve as liaison with war-service agencies. It would become the principal arm of the Board in all war-related activities (Journal 1917, 541).

Individual Board members made various war-related proposals which were referred to the Special Committee, all of which were later implemented. One member proposed that school buildings be made available without cost to the National Security League and its female counterpart, the Women's Security League, for lectures and patriotic meetings. Among the earliest war-preparedness groups to emerge in the United States, and among the most conservative politically, they were anxious to communicate their patriotic message to the wider audience the schools could provide (Journal 1917, 542; Kennedy, 31, 67). When approved at the April 25th meeting, the Superintendent of Schools was authorized to grant the use of school facilities to any organization who wished to use them for "patriotic purposes" (Journal 1917, 650).

Another member proposed that the Department of Education offer to the military authorities "its domestic science equipment and teachers for the instruction of soldiers in courses of rationing and camp cooking" (Journal 1917, 542). And, in fact, the Board did provide a wide range of training to soldiers and sailors, including "camp cooking."

Yet another member proposed cooperation with the Red Cross (Journal 1917, 542). This would result in a fully elaborated program in the schools to assist the Red Cross in a variety of undertakings, including sewing and knitting clothes for

troops, collecting clothing and supplies and rolling bandages for medical kits (Journal 1917, 650).

General George Wingate, long-time Board member, proposed that boys in their senior year who were eligible to graduate in June and who wished to enlist, should be "excused from attendance at school upon their entrance into service in the Army or the Navy, and that their graduation is hereby authorized... [and] that upon the diplomas of such graduates note be made of the fact that they have volunteered to serve their country" (Journal 1917, 542).

Wingate's proposal was unanimously adopted. Patriotic war service was an acceptable substitute for academic study. Boys should not be denied the glory of service to their country, not even for a month. As we will see, the superiority and priority of war service over school work was acknowledged for teachers and administrators as well as for students. The Board would facilitate the passage from classroom to warfront for all those willing to perform their patriotic duty.

At this first "war-time" meeting, however, the only concrete action taken by the Board was to unanimously approve a leave of absence without pay to a shop teacher who wished to work for a war contractor that was manufacturing planes for the War Department (Journal 1917, 543).

The unanimity of sentiments regarding the government's war policies extended beyond the members of the Board to the powerful 24-member Association of District Superintendents. As indicated in a formal "communication" to the Board, the Association, by unanimous vote, "pledged unqualified loyalty to our country." They proposed "making a study of the means by which the schools may intensify patriotism," and offered to "perform the official duties" of any Superintendents who might be seconded to the government to undertake war services. Reinforcing the proposed teacher

loyalty pledge with which Willcox opened the meeting, the Superintendents concluded their message as follows: "We assume, with confidence, the active participation of the entire teaching force in this expression of loyalty and tender of service" (Journal 1917, 543). The implication that Board and Superintendents would rely on voluntary collaboration rather than compulsory compliance was challenged by the very next action of the Board. An elementary school principal in Brooklyn, Mr. Alexander Fichandler, had previously been denied a requested transfer. It was now noted that he "had made a frank statement that, while he opposed the entrance of this country into the European War, he will absolutely and unequivocally abide by the action of our government" (Journal 1917, 543). Now he found that an inquiry into his loyalty was being proposed as well as into "the character of the work in this school...." (Journal 1917, 544). This was the first of an ever growing chorus of warnings and not so veiled threats to teachers and principals to toe the line and actively support the government "by word and example," or suffer censure, suspension or expulsion from the city's schools.

III. INSTITUTIONALIZING THE STATE OF WAR IN THE SCHOOLS

The April 11th meeting of the Board represented the patriotic enlistment of New York City's schools in the Great War "for the duration." In subsequent meetings the Board and its senior administrators moved to translate their fine speeches into school practice.

Formal Steps to Integrate Schools into War Mobilization

On a formal level, the school system was integrated into the larger federal effort to mobilize the nation. Teachers and school facilities were put at the disposal of the government to conduct the military census in June 1917 (21,000 teachers

"volunteered" to work on the census, according to District Superintendent O'Shea), and subsequent registration for conscription (Journal 1917, 882; Journal 1918, 1200; O'Shea, 1).

The physical facilities of the schools were made available for war-related work: military training of students, cooking facilities for the training of army and navy cooks, commercial and vocational school workshops for the training of war industry workers, athletic fields for military conscript training and school buildings for draft registration (Journal 1917, 623, 650, 746, 748, 819-21, 1652; Journal 1918, 21, 344f, 447-49, 620, 621, 710, 766, 854f, 1164-761, 1200, 1223f, 1463-71). Not a single school building could escape some level of involvement in war work.

The Board also officially committed staff to war-related programs. As early as April 25th it approved the transfer of classroom teachers to serve as supervisors of farm work (a project discussed below). On May 23 a resolution was passed assigning teachers to war service activities, including supervision of farm services and school gardens, and including three teachers who were assigned to the office of the Deputy Superintendent for high schools who were to assist with the rapidly growing volume of war activities under his jurisdiction. Finally, District Superintendent William O'Shea was assigned to oversee war work in the schools, and District Superintendent Lyons to establish "camps for boys [to do farm work]" (Journal 1917, 651, 746, 821).

As the war progressed and war work expanded, an ever growing number of teachers and administrators were assigned to direct and carry out war-related activities in the schools, with salaries paid for directly out of Department of Education funds[1] (Journal 1917 and 1918).

Teachers into Soldiers

The Board of Education moved swiftly and expeditiously to facilitate the transition of teachers into soldiers. For those male teachers who wished to enlist (and later this was extended to include the petitions of female teachers who joined Red Cross or Ambulance Brigades in France) a unanimous resolution of the Board on May 9, 1917 provided that

> the absence of all officers and employees throughout the public school system be excused, when such absence is occasioned by any form of military or naval service required by the United States or the State of New York, the compensation of such persons, whether annual or per diem, to be continued at the rates to which they are now legally entitled [less remuneration received for military service] (Journal 1917, 748).

Jobs were held open, no pay was lost, and teachers who enlisted were held up as models of courageous patriotic service. Their actions were publicized in school newspapers and magazines, and their deaths memorialized if they made the "ultimate sacrifice." Later in the war, when teachers were faced with conscription and were anxious to enlist before being drafted (a problem because city regulations required prior approval from the mayor in order to receive pay supplementation under the city's Fennor Law), coverage was extended to all enlisted men (Journal 1917, 1862f). And in the case of A. Gertrude Jacob, a teacher at Jamaica High School, she was permitted to serve with the Friends' Reconstruction Unit of the Red Cross in France, and continued to receive her salary less the cost of the salary for her substitute (Journal 1917, 1653).

Not only did the Board give its official blessing to the war and the raising of an army by helping to conduct the military census, register men for conscription and facilitate the enlistment of its own employees, it also mobilized its resources to train personnel for the war effort.

Student Military Training

Most significantly, the Board willingly participated in the compulsory military training of its own male students. The Slater Law (Chapter 566 of the Laws of New York State, 1916) had provided for the military training of males ages 16-19 who were enrolled in school, although such training was to take place three hours per week outside of regular school hours. Training was provided by teachers and physical education instructors who were designated by the local school board and who would receive appropriate training from the Schoolmen's Battalion of the National Guard. Prior to the U.S. declaration of war, over 3,000 boys received training in New York City under the direction of the Public Schools' Athletic League. In May of 1917 the Board nominated to the State Military Training Commission those teachers who had already provided training under the P.S.A.L. (Journal 1917, 819f).

On paper all eligible boys received military training. In practice, however, there was an acknowledged breakdown in implementation. On March 13, 1918 the Acting Superintendent of Schools and Director of Physical Training reported to the Board that the military training effort was going very poorly. Attendance was poor (ranging from 2% to 89% in the city's high schools, with only four schools with better than 50% attendance rates). City-wide, based on incomplete statistics, attendance was in the 40-45% range. They reported that "the training is admittedly 'unpopular' [and] the most successful training units... have gone far down. There are uniforms belonging to the schools, which are ready for boys who do not want them. Except for the Cavalry Unit at Erasmus Hall... the training is exclusively close-order drill, including manual of arms. This is for 'disciplinary' purposes. In practical modern warfare it is little used. There is no signaling, setting-up, first aid, medical examination. There is prospect of a band" (Journal 1918, 346).

Officially, they argued, the Board had no obligation other than to nominate teachers as military trainers and to provide school grounds for drill. Nor did the law include penalties for non-compliance. But they felt the Board had a "moral obligation" to uphold the laws, especially related to military activities. They quoted with approbation the letter of February 21, 1918 to the Board from State Commissioner of Education John Finley which had triggered the Board's inquiry and had criticized New York City for not complying with the Military Training Law. Even though the Law neither made school authorities responsible for enforcement, nor included such training in the regular curriculum, Finley stressed "the obligation that is resting upon the school authorities to impress upon the children and youth attending such schools the duty of individuals to obey the laws" (Journal 1918, 344-347).

The military training situation was sent back by the Board for further study and two weeks later, on March 27th, a final report was submitted.

> The situation is of critical importance. The nation is at war. A State law calling for the training of its youth for war is in operation and the Department of Education is placed in a position where its cooperation can make this law an effective and important influence in national defense.... Neglecting to give our fullest cooperation and to exert our fullest influence, we continue to educate those who openly defy a law calculated to instill patriotism and to support our national effort to make safe forever a universal democracy, while our energetic action will inculcate respect for the law, and strengthen the national programme of defense. Our duty is clear [italics in original] (Journal 1918, 447).

The Acting Superintendent, Director of Physical Training and the members of the Board chose to overlook the criticisms of two weeks earlier regarding the poor quality and questionable relevance of military training. And in the name of patriotism and respect for law, greatly strengthened the implementation of military training in the schools. Most significantly, by unanimous vote, the Board decreed

> That henceforward no boy shall be graduated from the high schools or vocational schools of the City of New York unless he has fulfilled his obligation with respect to military training [or been excused by the Superintendent for reason, and]
>
> That no boy be permitted to remain a student who persistently refused to report for his instruction in military training.... (Journal 1918, 449).

Under the flag of universal democracy, military training became a requirement for graduation and for continuation in school for all boys over 16 years of age in New York City's high schools. And to implement these new regulations a bureaucratic apparatus was created: specially assigned administrators and teachers, records and reporting forms, coordination with the Military Training Commission, and so forth. The new regulations, and graduation and retention requirements, were to go into effect virtually immediately, on April 4, 1918, well in time for June commencement.

Farm Service

The Special Committee on War Service, in its first presentation to the Board on April 16, 1917, recommended an experimental camp in the countryside for 24 boys and a supervising teacher, who would engage in farm work. With so many young men entering the armed forces, there was a shortage of farm labor in many parts of the United States, at the very time that American agricultural products were in critical demand on the domestic front and especially among the food-starved allies. Here was a noble and patriotic service that New York City's boys could render the nation. To facilitate recruitment of young men into the schools' Farm Service, "farm work during such time as the public schools of the city are in session [would] be considered as equivalent to school work" (Journal 1917, 651).

Unlike military training, implementation was swift and successful. By May 9, 1917, 230 boys were already living in eight farm camps throughout the state, at

work in fields, orchards and stockyards. Associate Superintendent Tildsley (High Schools) was directing a survey of eligible boys in the high schools so that the number of farm workers would be further expanded. The good work of the student-farm workers (and perhaps the free worker supervision and low wages) was beginning "to break down the skepticism now existing among many farmers..." (Journal 1917, 746f).

Based on the experiences gained in the summer of 1917, the Farm Service was greatly expanded for 1918. Between April 1st and October 15th of 1918 over 2,000 boys were placed on farms. Mr. Frank Rexford, a teacher at Erasmus Hall High School, named to head the Farm Service, could report at war's end that among other things, the boys were responsible for harvesting nearly 11,000 of 35,500 acreas of participating farmers' crops, crops that would otherwise have gone unpicked, thousands of additional bushels of vegetables and 324,000 quarts of berries. The last mentioned crop harvest was not an exclusively male contribution, as the Board had organized four girls' service camps in 1918 to work in orchards and berry groves (Journal 1918, 1467f).

The Farm Service was highly praised by government and the agricultural sector in the state. Rexford, in fact, strongly recommended making it a regular part of the Board of Education's program. "It has been our experience that 95 percent of the boys--some of them admitted failures in 1917, when they went out on the farms--have come back to school and made better showings in the classroom than ever before. There is no physical training, no military training, that the boy of high school age is subject to which puts him in so good a physical condition as a summer's work on the farm" (Journal 1918, 1470).

A chance to live in the country, to share in the comraderie of a small group of peers, to socialize with one's teachers (who were selected with their willingness

and ability to work with adolescent boys taken into account as well as their enthusiasm for voluntary service in the rough environment of a farm camp), the opportunity to make some money while earning academic credit, and the opportunity to serve their country in time of need, may help to explain the success of the schools' Farm Service.

Training for War Work

The Board of Eduction also undertook to train members of the military forces in crucial vocational skills. Using tax levied funds, "War Service Classes" were offered in three evening trade schools both during the regular school year, and, at the request of federal officials, during an extended summer session in 1918 (Journal 1918, 620). Cooking classes were also offered and "hundreds of our soldiers have received instruction in army camp cooking" (Journal 1918, 621). In addition to soldiers, 40 boys from the Farm Service took the cooking course so they could serve as cooks at the fruit-picking camps throughout the state (Journal 1918, 710).

Armies may travel on their stomachs, but their marching orders are inscribed on paper. The war created an enormous demand for secretarial and clerical workers. In response, on May 14, 1918, the Board authorized a "summer school for training for war service" at Washington Irving High School (a vocational-commercial girls high school in Manhattan). "There is real need this summer," the Board was told, "for a summer high school of a highly specialized type which shall enroll selected women of sufficient maturity and established ability for intensive courses that shall prepare them for government service... both in New York City and Washington--stenographers, typists, bookkeeping clerks and filing clerks." The United States Civil Service Commission assured the Board that "the work of the departments at Washington is being crippled through the lack of such competent help" (Journal 1918, 621).

In addition to clerical workers, there was also an acute shortage of nurses and nurses' assistants. As part of the same summer program, the Board approved an eight week course, with clinical practice, to "train for home nursing, general convalescent nursing, dietetic cooking, etc., thus furnishing aides to nurses who could relieve the more competent workers for more serious cases" (Journal 1918, 621f).

The schools also assisted the war effort by offering food conservation classes to students and to the people of the city (Journal 1918, 514, 623, 710, 904). Red Cross sewing became part of the elementary schools' sewing classes and funds allocated for supplies were authorized to be used to purchase materials needed for Red Cross work (Journal 1917, 542, 650). Farm gardens were established at schools and on city-owned land to help increase food supplies and supervisors were assigned in each borough to oversee this work (Journal 1917, 746, 748).

Stimulating Patriotism

In addition to specific programs and activities mounted by the Board to promote the American war effort, from the very week that war was declared each and every school and the vast majority of school employees tried to promote patriotism and service among the entire student body. Commencing with the reading in every school on April 16th of Wilson's "war" speech of April 2, 1917, the schools used every opportunity to stimulate love of country, obedience to its laws and service to the government. On April 19th with only three days prior notice, over 25,000 school children participated in the "Wake-up America" parade. "The readiness, promptness, and good marching of the children elicited the admiration of the multitudes that witnessed the parade [which] had the desired effect in awakening the latent patriotism of many thousand New Yorkers" (O'Shea, 1). The bright faces of New York's children displaying patriotic

fervor was obviously in great demand for war parades as schools were consistently requested to participate by local and national authorities. The schools seemed only too happy to oblige. They marched for the military census, draft registration and, of course, for War Bond Campaigns.

The State of New York, apparently unconvinced that there was adequate "latent patriotism" among the state's school children, or that informal and voluntary patriotic activities were inadequate, amended the education law in 1918 to require instruction in patriotism and citizenship (Chapter 241, section 705-706, of the Education Law, effective April 17, 1918). "In order to promote a spirit of patriotic and civic service... the Regents of the University of the State of New York shall prescribe courses of instruction in patriotism and citizenship...." Such instruction was compulsory for all children over the age of eight in all public schools of the state. "Similar courses of instruction shall be prescribed and maintained in private schools in the state...." If not provided in private schools, attendance at such schools would not satisfy the compulsory attendance law (Journal 1918, 687). In the case of private schools, the state wanted to insure that all children had proper patriotic indoctrination especially those who attended religious schools where they might be exposed to "foreign influences," in particular German Catholic and German Lutheran schools.

Charitable fund-raising was another means employed to teach good citizenship and right thinking. Principals were authorized to collect one cent from those children who wished to contribute to the "Committee for the Protection of Invalids No. 2" which was presided over by the French President and aided thousands of disabled French soldiers (Journal 1918, 365f.). Funds were raised even before war was declared to help the suffering population in Belgium. Used clothing drives were mounted and in one case 25 tons of "clothing in good condition" was collected for French and

Belgian children (O'Shea, 2). And in an appeal which must have captured the imagination of all school children, the government appealed to school children to collect fruit pits and nut shells used in the manufacture of gas masks. The city's school children collected over 200 tons (O'Shea, 2).

The final charitable solicitation of the war, the United War Work campaign launched at war's end was "to supply our soldiers and sailors overseas with much needed comfort and cheer," to meet other war relief needs and for the care and comfort of disabled soldiers in the New York area. Teachers were asked to contribute one-half day's pay, older children to pledge $5.00 (payable in installments), and younger children two cents per week from Armistice Day to the following May. Patriotism and generosity, perhaps mixed with public pressure and supervisory scrutiny yielded well over $400,000 in pledges (Journal 1918, 1656). This total grew to nearly $725,000 by the fall of 1919 (O'Shea, 3).

Liberty Loan Campaigns

The most extensive patriotic activity in the schools, and perhaps the one with the greatest impact on students, was the sale of Liberty Bonds. Teachers organized elementary and high school students to canvass their neighborhoods advertising the Liberty Loan Campaigns, and to promote and sell bonds to parents, relatives and neighbors. And the campaigns were highly successful. In the Second Liberty Loan drive, for example, New York City's schools sold $31.4 million of the state school total of $34.9 million (Journal 1917, 1861).

For those too poor to purchase bonds (even on installment), there were War Savings Certificates and Thrift Stamps to purchase. All told, the New York City public schools collected over $204 million in the five Loan Campaigns. And by March

of 1918 they had sold $740,000 worth of Savings Certificates and Stamps (O'Shea, 3; Journal 1918, 463f).

The Third Liberty Loan, to which the schools contributed over $72 million in sales, was perhaps the apex of patriotic activity in New York City schools. Acting Superintendent Dr. Gustave Straubenmüller was co-director of the campaign and the Germanic cast to his name in no wise affected the patriotic fervor he brought to the task. His able co-director was District Superintendent in Charge of War Service William O'Shea who was promoted to Associate Superintendent shortly after the Campaign. Speaking enthusiastically in support of the Campaign in the schools, Board President Somers saw the Liberty Loan not only as a way of financially supporting the war effort, but as a great Americanizing influence.

Launched on April 8, 1918, work in the schools was closely coordinated down to the level of the individual school with that of the Metropolitan Canvass Committee. Patriotic exercises were held at every school prior to and during the Campaign. One such program, at P.S. 168, included the singing of patriotic songs, the presentation of a one-act play, "The Light of Liberty," a recitation entitled "There Is No Hyphen in My Heart," and a prayer for the President of the United States, sung by the audience (Journal 1918, 1167).

There was systematic canvassing of school parents and a printed circular was distributed which "was printed in three languages and made a strong plea for the Loan. All children were strongly urged to get their parents to subscribe. Elaborate follow-up systems were instituted in many schools to make sure that every parent was duly reached. Where there were no results, the teacher of the class or a committee of the pupils generally called upon the parent to seek to induce him to change his mind. The results of this phase of the campaign can hardly be overestimated" (Journal 1918,

1168). The lesson taught to school children on the powers of collective persuasion must have been equally as successful.

In the official report of the Campaign that O'Shea submitted to the Board, he included anecdotes on how children successfully pressured parents to buy bonds. In one instance, a girl whose father had refused went on a hunger strike.

> I said to my father, "please buy a bond." My father said, "No." Then I begged my father, and I said, "If you are an American, father, you will buy a bond"; but my father said "No" once more. Then I said, "I am an American. If you will not buy a bond, I cannot eat." So I did not eat my supper, though my father and my mother begged me to eat; and I went to bed. In the morning my father said, "Nettie, eat your breakfast." But I said, "No; I am an American. You will not buy a bond; I cannot eat." Then my father said to my mother, "Go, buy a bond."

The schools mounted parade after parade and O'Shea could boast that "the Americanizing effects of these parades upon those who participated in them were beyond estimation... Uncle Sams and Miss Liberties could be seen daily parading in different parts of the city" (Journal 1918, 1169f).

Junior 4-Minute Speakers were recruited in the schools to add their voices to the orchestrated chorus promoting bond sales. They spoke in local theatres and movie houses stressing the theme that we were fighting a war of democracy against autocracy.[2] Twelve-year old Grace Pruschen of Manhattan, one such speaker, declaimed that "a Liberty Bond may be only a scrap of paper, but it is a scrap of paper which bears upon its face the death warrant to Autocracy in its last stronghold." We must fight the Germans because "if we fail to do as the great Jehovah commanded our ancestors to do, then the Central Powers will become masters. Our freedom of speech, thought, and action will then be subjected to their bidding" (Journal 1918, 1170).

The bond campaign was integrated into classroom instruction. As O'Shea reported, "nothing is more fundamental in stimulating patriotic endeavor than the correlation

of war service of all kinds with classwork." In O'Shea's estimation, "the constant holding before the children of the vital necessity of giving whole-hearted support to our government in the present crisis, doubtless had as much to do with the overwhelming success of the Third Liberty Loan... as any other single factor" (Journal 1918, 1171).

Buttons and prizes were distributed for individuals and schools with strong sales. Schools were assigned sales quotas and within schools prinicipals often devised classroom quotas. There were efforts to stimulate competition to make and exceed quotas and thereby win prizes and public recognition. Principals were not unaware of the significance of the latter. Loyalty was also stressed: "a very important means of stimulating pupils to do their utmost, was the constant emphasizing of the duty of loyalty to the class and to the school" (Journal 1918, 1173). Fear of letting down your side was undoubtedly a real spur to many a child.

Among tne lessons O'Shea drew from the schools' intensive experience in the month-long bond drive was that it demonstrated the loyalty of New York City teachers, a loyalty which had been questioned. The campaign provided "overwhelming evidence that New York is blessed with a body of teachers whose bright burning patriotism is a 'pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day.' The almost staggering accomplishments of our schools in the Loan were made possible only because twenty-two thousand teachers, under the leadership of their principals and superintendents, threw themselves into this great patriotic task with a fervor and enthusiasm unparallel in educational history" (Journal 1918, 1174).

O'Shea, a bright and ambitious schoolman who would ascend to the superintendency of the city's schools, could not help but comprehend the irony of the metaphor he used to describe teachers taken from Exodus 13:21. In 1918 New York City had already become the largest Jewish city in the world and Jewish children accounted for about

35% of school enrollments. By analogy he saw New York City school teachers now leading the Children of Israel to the Promised Land of America, cleansing them of old ways, beliefs and languages and preparing them to take their places as patriotic citizens of a democracy. Thus, it is understandable that O'Shea believed that "the greatest lesson of the campaign... is to be found in its Americanizing influence upon the pupils," and "that the work for the loans has been the most striking welding influence ever known in New York...." (Journal 1918, 1175).

The campaign, however, revealed a distasteful underside to the schools' patriotic activities. Peer pressures joined to quotas compelled children to opt for the hard sell of bonds and savings certificates. Children were openly used--playing on their desire to belong, to participate, to be red, white and blue Americans--to coerce and extort funds from poor (often immigrant) parents. Parents who did not wish to buy bonds often feared to speak out (or lacked the language to do so in public), or were too fearful to prevent their children from participating. They didn't want to see their children hurt or ostracized. Or perhaps these parents were afraid to force a confrontation with their children, making them choose between school (America) and home (the Old World), a confrontation many feared they might lose.

More ominously, a twelve-year old Junior 4-Minute Speaker could be used to argue, with sincerity, that autocracy was threatening our freedoms of speech and thought, but probably was insufficiently mature to realize that Board of Education war policies and 100 percent Americanism tended to achieve the same ends.

Thinking students, especially those in high schools, who worked for the Metropolitan Canvass Committee, could not help but be disturbed by the "Instructions to Canvassers" each worker received. In conducting a house-to-house canvass, set questions were provided which were to be directed to propsective buyers. Thus, "if you do not receive

a subscription, endeavor to ascertain and then indicate... whether any subscription was made to the first or second loan and if so the amount; and on the fifth line the reason for the person not subscribing to the third loan." If he claims he has already purchased bonds, "ask him kindly to tell you through which bank. If he resents this in any wise, explain that your instructions are specific, and if he declines to answer your question, you have nothing to do but to report what he says" (Instructions to Canvassers).

Canvassers, however, were expected to be much more than salesmen.

> In addition to [promoting and selling bonds], the United States Attorney General's office has requested that you render a special service to the Government by reporting [on the Military Census Cards used to insure maximum house-to-house coverage, and on which sales information was recorded] any people whose words or actions indicate to you that they are hostile to our Government in any way whatever.

The instructions from the Attorney General's Office are as follows:

> Whenever anyone solicited by you, but not subscribing for the loan, so expresses him or herself as to show a feeling of hostility to the United States or in favor of Germany in the war, the canvasser will at the time enter the word 'pro' on the card, and as soon as he has opportunity thereafter, enter also on the card the substance of what was said. By strictly observing this rule you will greatly help the United States in dealing with the enemy alien situation (Instructions to Canvassers).

In what can only be interpreted as the superiority of sales over sedition, hostile or seditious speech is not to be reported if a sale is made.

Not only was patriotism to be encouraged by means of the Liberty Loans, but opposition, especially alien opposition, was to be rooted out. Every patriot was also to be an undercover agent, free to interpret which actions were hostile or seditious. They were just performing their duty and helping to make the world safe for democracy.[3]

The Third Liberty Loan with its flag waving and high sounding rhetoric was by no means the final act in the Board of Education's efforts to draw schools more perfectly into the national war effort. Several changes were made in the official "Course of Study" to enhance the alignment of schools and the war.

Changes in the Curriculum

In May of 1918 the Board adopted a course in "European History since 1760" as a high school graduation requirement, "inasmuch as we have definitely abandoned our isolation and are playing a larger part in the family of nations. It seems necessary, as never before, that our high school students should have a knowledge of recent European history as well as of the history of their own country" (Journal 1918, 624).

The Board also authorized "Community Civics" as a graduation requirement and, in addition, required that it be taught in the first year of the high school, to insure that dropouts as well as graduates received the course. "The events of the last year have convinced us that we need to impress upon the boys and girls of this city a clear understanding of the services rendered by the city government to the boys and girls and their corresponding duties to that government" (Journal 1918, 704).

Perhaps the most revealing curriculum developed in this period was "The World War: A Syllabus for Use in the Elementary Schools of the City of New York," adopted in June 1918 (a second syllabus, for use in the high schools, was produced at the same time). The "War Syllabus" accurately transmitted the war messages that the Wilson administration, speaking to the schools in large part through its Committee on Public Information, wished to convey.[4]

In the "War Syllabus" teachers and students would learn that "We are at war not of our own choice but because war was made upon us and we are obliged to defend ourselves. The war was started by Germany" (War Syllabus, 5). In addition, "It is a war made by an autocratic emperor upon democratic people.... Since 1776 our country has stood for Democracy. Now Germany is trying to crush Democracy, and America must help to make Democracy safe all over the world" (The World War: A Syllabus, 5).

Throughout the syllabus we are portrayed as the good guys, and the Germans and their comrades in arms as bad. Our war aims are selfless, noble and true. Patriotism is stimulated throughout and there are ample suggestions on how students can participate in the war effort. The syllabus communicates the attitude that it is inconceivable and un-American to oppose one's government in time of need. You would be letting down your side and would display cowardice. Opposition to the war, in fact, was simply outside the bounds of tolerable discourse. We are in the right, the syllabus teaches, we are fighting for the democratic American way, and thus it is inconceivable not to support the government. As a corollary, those who oppose or openly question the war are suspected of being anti-democratic, anti-American and pro-German. Teachers were expected to work at insuring right thinking and active commitment and to serve as the very model of the committed citizen.

Not all curricula changes were "additions" to the "Course of Study." Schools and the instruction they offered had to be cleansed of all pernicious and potentially corrupting influences. By unanimous vote the Board suspended for the duration of the war the teaching of all languages other than English in the elementary schools (Journal 1917, 2010). In June 1918 the Board ordered that "for the duration of the war, no classes in beginning German be organized in any public school...." (Journal 1918,

702). They argued that American teachers, now strongly opposed to Germany, lacked enthusiasm for teaching the language. Thus, "the effective teaching of German must... be done by teachers of German origin, and it is a question whether at this crisis this is for the best interests of the pupils who are to be trained in the study of Americanism" (Journal 1918, 702). They further argued that "New York should lead the way in abolishing the teaching of German as a means, even though a slight means, of winning the war by making a dent in Pan-Germanism...." (Journal 1918, 702). They concluded that "our nation is aligned against German Kultur [sic]. We have had too much of it" (Journal 1918, 703).

Eliminating German from the schools apparently was inadequate for the State's Board of Regents. In July 1918 they unanimously passed a regulation requiring "that all instruction in the elementary shcools of the state shall be in English and from English texts," and that the ruling applied "to all private and parochial elementary schools as well as to public elementary schools" (Journal 1918, 1568). "All the instruction given in a public elementary school from the time the school opens in the morning until it closes in the afternoon must be in English and the textbooks used in giving such instruction must be printed in English." Private and parochial schools were held to the same standard and if found in violation, their pupils would be considered truants under the compulsory education law (Journal 1918, 1568f). Consistent with the English only rule, a member of New York City's Board, Mrs. Ruth Russell, proposed and saw adopted her resolution "that all placards, signs, announcements, circulars and other forms of advertising posted or distributed on school premises or properties must be printed in the English language," with special exceptions made only with the approval of the superintendent himself (Journal 1918, 1417).

Not only did instructions have to derive from books printed only in English, but the state education law was amended in April 1918 to eliminate texts containing seditious or disloyal matter. A commission was created "whose duty it shall be on complaint to examine text-books used in the public schools of the state in the subjects of civics, economics, English, history, language and literature, for the purpose of determining whether such text-books contain any matter or statements of any kind which are seditious in character, disloyal to the United States or favorable to the cause of any foreign country with which the United States is now at war." Complaints could be made by any individual and if verified by the commission, the offending book was summarily banned from the schools (Journal 1918, 688f).

Silencing Dissent

Promoting patriotism and support of the war would fail unless teachers actively cooperated with the Board. Teachers who willingly assumed their patriotic duty (as defined by the Board) were applauded, those who were not actively committed to the war had to be encouraged, and teachers who opposed the war or dissented from government policy had to be identified and expelled from the schools.

Initially the state and city had recourse to loyalty oaths and pledges of allegiances (Journal 1917, 540f, 1198). Chapter 524 of the New York State Laws of 1917 required a loyalty oath of all public employees, including public school teachers, and Chapter 416 provided for removal of civil service workers for "treasonous or seditious word."

There were also public attacks launched against teachers who dissented. Following the dismissal of three teachers at De Witt Clinton High School on charges of questionable commitment to the U.S. war effort, all district superintendents officially communicated to the Board their "unqualified loyalty to the United States in its war with the Imperial

government of Germany.... We take this opportunity to repudiate the words and actions of any disloyal or seditious members of the teaching and supervising staffs of the public schools." The presence of such teachers in the schools were considered a menace. "At a time when thousands of young Americans are leaving their homes to die, if need be, for their country, the toleration of open and insidious disloyalty in our schools would be a flagrant abuse of freedom of speech," and thus they believed that "any teacher who is not a positive force in inculcating Americanism should not be permitted to remain in our schools" (Journal 1917, 1863).

The Board president himself, in one of the final actions of the old Board reinforced the stand of the district superintendents.[5] Neutrality would not do at this critical juncture in the nation's history. The American people, he believed, were united in support of the government and the war. He quoted State Education Commissioner Finley who argued that "if a teacher cannot give that unquestioning support to the country that makes his own individual freedom in time of peace possible, his place is not in the school.... What a travesty it would be if beneath the national flag... there skulked a disloyal teacher accepting his salary from his country while openly or insidiously weakening its defenses."

While President Willcox concluded that "no teacher should be employed... who cannot be trusted to exert a positive influence in developing in the pupils a spirit of patriotism, of respect for public officials, and of loyal support of the American government in carrying forward the war" (Journal 1917, 1950).

Teachers themselves got into the act of purging their own ranks.[6] In May of 1918 the First Assistants in History in high schools proposed to the Board that it "adopt effective measures to prevent the licensing as teachers of persons devoid of the spirit of loyalty to our government and nation..." (Journal 1918, 643).

In April of 1918, U.S. citizenship became a requirement to teach in New York State. Teachers who were aliens had to apply for citizenship within a year or lose their jobs (Journal 1918, 686). Seeking clarification from the Commissioner of Education, the Board was informed in August 1918 that all teachers of the Board were covered by the law, including the provision of a one-year grace period for aliens to apply for their citizenship papers. However, he ruled that "it is my judgment that an enemy alien who is prevented from qualifying for citizenship, but who may be employed as a teacher in the school system of the city, should be discontinued in the teaching service" (Journal 1918, 1219). The Board thus had another weapon, if they needed it, to use against dissidents in the schools.

Compulsory oaths, official exhortations, required curricula, peer pressures and war-induced super-patriotism were still not enough to force every one of the more than 22,000 city teachers to enthusiastically fall into line. The Board, however, sent out clear and consistent signals from the very start that dissent would not be tolerated. Teachers who would not actively support the war or participate in war work in the schools, and those suspected of questionable loyalties, were suspended and often dismissed on charges of "conduct unbecoming a teacher." At least ten teachers were fired (and many more transferred to less desirable posts). This was not a large number yet their public hearings at the Board were run as show trials and the causes leading to suspensions and the predicable verdicts of dismissal were trumpeted among the teachers and citizens of the city.[7]

The first precedent setting case, and the most highly publicized, occurred in the fall of 1917, the first full term after declaration of war. Thomas Mufson, A Henry Schneer and Samuel D. Schmalhausen were teachers at De Witt Clinton High School when they were suspended on November 12, 1917 on charges of "conduct unbecoming

a teacher."[8] Known as the De Witt Clinton Three, all were Jews, socialists and members of the Teachers Union, an organization strongly opposed by the Board (Muraskin; Weinstein; Zitron). Their affiliations were not calculated to predispose in their favor the patriotic members of the Board.

Mufson, a teacher of English, was charged with failing "to live up to his duty as teacher, inasmuch as he conceives it proper to maintain before his classes an attitude of strict neutrality in class discussions dealing with [anarchy vs. the U.S. government] and the duty of every one to support the government... in all measures taken by the federal government to insure the proper conduct of the present war" ("In the Matter of the Appeal," 12f).

Free and open discussion of the issues were clearly prohibited, according to the Board's interpretation of the duties of a teacher. Allegiance and obedience were the watchwords of the day.

In upholding the Board's decision to dismiss, the Acting Commissioner held that "the board... had the right to consider the fact that our government had declared war against Germany and that its action had the unanimous support of the people of the country," discounting, of course, the three teachers charged from among the unanimously supportive citizenry. Thus

> under this condition of the nation's affairs a teacher in a public school system will not be permitted to hide behind any claim of privilege when a question affecting his loyalty to the government is concerned. He must come out in the open and cheerfully and unhesitatingly stand up and make known to the entire community in which he is employed that he is giving his unquestioned support to the President and to the government in the prosecution of this war, and if he refuses to give such assurance he shall not be permitted to discharge the high office of teacher in an American public school system ("In the Matter of the Appeal," 13).

Schneer was charged with stating that patriotism should not be discussed in high school, that persons in military uniform should not address the student body

and that the Board had no right to give military training in the schools.[9] Again Finegan sustained the action of the Board, stating that "the views expressed by appellant... are not the views which should be expressed by a teacher in the public schools who is guiding the youth of a city" ("In the Matter of the Appeal," 15).

Schmalhausen was confronted by a set of charges which included a denial that it was his duty "to develop in the students under his control instinctive respect for the president of the United States" and other offices of government, that he failed to criticize a student who made disloyal statements in a letter to the president prepared as part of a homework assignment and, further, that he considered it proper for the offending pupil to read this and similar letters aloud in class ("In the Matter of the Appeal," 16). Schmalhausen's crime was, in effect, to permit free expression in students' writing and in classroom discussion. The head of the English department, Miss Ellene Garrigues found his assignment improper ("Write a very frank letter to Woodrow Wilson commenting within the limits of your knowledge upon his conduct of the war against the German government"), and his refusal to consider as a breach of loyalty students' expression of dissenting views. Schmalhausen supported free expression and open investigation; the authorities championed indoctrination. In his appeals decision Finegan was moved to question "what influence was this teacher exerting over the boys under his instruction who would within one or two years be within the present draft ages?" ("In the Matter of the Appeal," 21).

"Teachers have the same right to form judgments and to express opinion upon public questions that other citizens possess," wrote Finegan. "A teacher is not compelled to sacrifice his individuality, his personal liberties or his judgment upon social and public problems simply because he is a teacher. Upon questions on which citizens generally may express different opinions or judgments, a teacher has the right to

express his opinion and to form his own judgment... There is, however, no difference of opinion among the patriotic citizens of this country as to the duty of all Americans in supporting the president of the United States and the government in the prosecution of this war." It thus was the obligation of every teacher "to suport the government, to teach respect and love for our democratic institutions and for the president as such of this republic." And quoting former Commissioner Finley, he maintained that "the same degree of loyalty is asked of a teacher as of a soldier" ("In the Matter of the Appeal," 21-22). As a result of his actions, therefore, Schmalhausen "forfeited his right to represent his country in the schoolroom" ("In the Matter of the Appeal," 22).

Government policy here became transformed into a fixed credo, and a test of orthodoxy. No deviation from the prescribed beliefs were permitted and violators were treated as heretics and excommunicated from the community of believers. Finegan, members of the Board and others could not see that majority rule had crossed the invisible boundary line and had become tyranny of the majority.

The De Witt Clinton Three case clearly announced to the city's teachers that visible patriotism and active support of the nation's war effort were requirements of the job. Permitting free speech in the classroom was highly dangerous and opened a teacher to charges of fomenting dissent. It was safest to follow the letter of the curriculum, sell bonds, keep students in line and march in parades.

Two other cases of dismissal need to be mentioned. One involved Mary E. MacDowell, a teacher of Latin at Manual Training High School in Brooklyn. Miss MacDowell, a Quaker and a pacifist, was dismissed in June 1918, because she would not encourage the sale of thrift stamps or "further other phases of the national cause" (N.Y. Sun, June 20, 1918, Wilsey Scrapbooks). The Board cast aside her defense that

supporting the war was contrary to her religious beliefs which, she argued, were guaranteed by the United States Constitution. A leading educational journalist of the day, writing of the MacDowell case, reported that

> Teachers who hold pacifist views and who are unwilling to do all in their power to further the cause of the United States in the war are not wanted in the city schools (N.Y. Globe n.d. [c. June 18,1918], Wilsey Scrapbooks).

Lastly is the case of Gertrude Pinol, a German teacher, also at Manual Training High School. Born and raised in Berlin, she was characterized in the press as the teacher who loved Germany. In fact, she claimed she could not renounce the love she felt for her native culture and language [which she was employed to teach], but that she also loved her American home.[10] Dual loyalties, however, could not be tolerated and she too was dismissed by the Board in June 1918.

Educating Adult Immigrants

Mention must also be made of the Board's war-time efforts to Americanize the city's adult immigrants. Immediately following declaration of war, the Board increased the number of classes it offered to teach English to immigrants, beginning with the summer of 1917. They also actively encouraged attendance in such classes (Journal 1917, 1317). Prior to the war the Board could not be convinced to offer summer classes and certainly had not engaged in promoting attendance (Brumberg, Chapter 5).

At the request of the Mayor's Committee on National Defense, the Board increased classes for adult immigrants in the fall term in order "to spread the knowledge of English and the development of patriotic citizenship." Over 900 evening-school teaching positions were authorized and classes were organized throughout the immigrant districts

of the city (Journal 1917, 1525-26). The motivating force for this new found interest in adult immigrant education was clearly indicated in a report to the Board:

> About a month after the declaration of war the American people began to realize that it had in this country over 12,000,000 unassimilated non-English-speaking aliens, and immediately the body of citizens at large determined that this condition should be immediately remedied (Journal 1917, 1526).

In May of 1918 an amendment to the state education law put on a compulsory basis the education of 16 to 21 year-old immigrants who could not speak English:

> Every minor, between sixteen and twenty-one years of age, who does not possess such ability to speak, read and write the English language, as is required, for the completion of the fifth grade... shall attend some day or evening school or some school maintained by an employer... throughout the entire time such school is in session (Journal 1918, 846).

While there is evidence that employer-run schools were established, in general, the record does not indicate that this law was ever effectively implemented. It was more an expression of sentiment than of intended action.[11]

For most immigrants living in New York City at the time of the Great War, their education in Americanism derived from viewing and perhaps participating in the great public displays of patriotism, in their compliance with conscription laws and in serving in the military (directly or vicariously through family members or friends), and through the experiences of their own children in New York's schools.

IV. CONCLUSION

Alexis de Tocqueville seemed to describe what transpired in New York City schools nearly a century before it occurred. He had predicted that as soon as war was declared by Congress the schools, along with the rest of American society, would rapidly fall in line, actively support the government and quash the voice of dissent. He clearly understood the

> power exercised by the majority in America upon opinion. At the present time the most absolute monarchs in Europe cannot prevent certain opinions hostile to their authority from circulating in secret through their dominions and even in their courts. It is not so in America: as long as the majority is still undecided, discussion is carried on; but as soon as its decision is irrevocably pronounced, everyone is silent, and the friends as well as the opponents of the measure unite in assenting to its propriety. The reason for this is perfectly clear: no monarch is so absolute as to combine all the powers of society in his own hands and to conquer all opposition, as a majority is able to do, which has the right both of making and of executing the laws (de Tocqueville, v. 1, 273).

He could have been writing of New York's schools when he concluded that "I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America" (de Tocqueville, v. 1, 275).

He heard former Senator Elihu Root even before he spoke on the duties of citizens in wartime:

> Before the decision of a proposal to make war, men may range themselves upon one side or the other of the question; but after the decision in favor of war the country has ranged itself, the only issue left for the individual citizen to decide is whether he is for or against his country (Harding, 72).

For Root, "a democracy which cannot accept its own decisions," which goes on endlessly debating, "has failed in... self-government." And in wartime that spelled defeat (Harding, 72).

Root's argument that debate was now closed and that active support and obedience was imperative, was mirrored in the sentiments and policies of the members of the Board of Education and of the State Commissioner of Education. Once the majority had decided, the teacher along with all citizens, had no right to oppose the popular will. Supporting government war policies meant that contrary views had to be excluded. Thus, teachers could not promote or permit free discussion in the classroom, as Schmalhausen had tried to do.

The Board and its senior administrators did not want to promote free inquiry. They sought instead to form patriotic citizens willing to actively support their government in wartime. Time for discussions had passed. Truth, as they perceived it, had been decided by a democratic vote of Congress.

The school in wartime was not the place to develop intellect but to teach the lessons of duty and service to one's nation. The mind was to be placed at the service of the heart of the patriot. In the words of a war activist,

> However, the maxim, my country right or wrong, may affront the reason or outrage the ethical sense of the modern man, the feeling which underlies it inheres in the very law of life. Our gregarious species could not have survived without it (Thomas, 217).

The leaders of New York's schools in wartime, like the majority of their fellow citizens, strongly supported their country and believed any opposition to be treasonous. Not surprisingly they sought to teach their students to act and believe as they did. As we have seen, they effectively marshalled all of the resources of the schools to achieve their patriotic ends.

Protected against dissent, supported by patriotic instruction, bolstered by stimulating involvement in war work, and moved by patriotic feelings, teachers and students could be counted upon to join the parade. All pupils and teachers were soldiers in the great "war to make the world safe for democracy," the "war to end all wars." When that day came, they would study war no more.

Endnotes

1. As each activity was proposed, the Board's Committee on Finance had to certify to the Department of Education's financial ability to conduct each activity proposed.

2. For a discussion of the Four-Minute Men organized by the Committee on Public Information, see Vaughn; Mock & Larson; and Creel. The best picture of these men can be found in Katherine Anne Porter's novella, Pale Horse, Pale Rider.

3. For the terrifying extent of official and unofficial surveillance, see Kennedy, 83f; Polenberg, Chapter 5.

4. See Creel; Mock & Larson; and Vaughn. See also Samuel B. Harding. The information provided by Harding, and his policy implications are perfectly consistent with the facts and interpretations offered in the "War Syllabus."

5. The old 46-member Board was dissolved and a new 7-member Board took its place on January 2, 1918.

6. The purges continued until well after the war. See Teachers' Council of New York City [the conservative opposition to the Teachers Union created with the assistance of the Board of Education], "The Exploitation of the Public School System of New York City."

7. For a vivid account of several of these hearings, see the contemporary newspaper accounts in "The Scrapbooks of Frank D. Wilsey," Vice-President of the Board, located in the Board of Education Archives, Teachers College Library.

8. "The decision, on Appeal" by Acting Commissioner of Education Thomas E. Finegan, handed down in October 1918, goes to great lengths to justify the use of this broad and ill-defined charge. His basic conclusion is that its definition is to be determined by the local Board of Education.

9. There was a fourth charge related to a bibliography he had compiled and had offered for sale in the school's book store that included references to works of a romantic or sexual nature considered inappropriate for high school boys. This was judged to be another example, in addition to the political charges, of his perverted nature and further served to disqualify him for the position of teacher.

10. Wilsey Scrapbooks contain a series of press accounts on the Pinol case.

11. For a discussion of an employer-run school see Jessie Howel MacCarthy, Where Garments and Americans Are Made.

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